

**REMARKS**

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 10, 11 14 and 18 have been cancelled. Claims 5, 6, 8 and 9 have been amended. Claims 5-9 and 15-17 are pending and under consideration.

Based on the claim changes, it is believed that the rejection raised in item 7 of the Office Action is the only relevant outstanding rejection. Specifically, this is the only rejection to address independent claims 7 and 15, the two remaining independent claims.

In item 7, claims 7 and 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,108,627 to Sabourin in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,913,194 to Karaali et al. Both independent claims 7 and 15 indicate that out-of-vocabulary (OOV) treatment for phonetic transcription of the further constituent is performed by a neuron-network. The Examiner cites Karaali et al. for this feature. The Examiner refers to the Abstract of Karaali et al. However, it is submitted that Karaali et al. does not disclose out-of-vocabulary treatment for phonetic transcription the further constituent being performed by a neuron-network.

Karaali et al. teaches a neural-network module converting normalized linguistic information into neural-network output parameters. The neural-network output parameters are finally used to generate synthetic speech by a waveform synthesizer. As the normalized linguistic information fed into the neural-network can include phoneme identifiers, the neural-network clearly does not perform grapheme/phoneme conversion. Karaali et al. instead teaches a conversion of phonemes into speech grameters. See Karaali et al. column 1, lines 19-36.

The Examiner is requested to also note the discussion in Karaali et al. at column 1, lines 38-52, which describes the problems with using a neural-network and concludes that neural-network based speech synthesis systems perform poorly.

Because neither Sabourin nor Karaali et al. disclose or suggest that a neuron-network phonetically transcribes the further constituent of the given word with the aid of out-of-vocabulary treatment, the out-of-vocabulary treatment being performed based on phonetic context, as a function of the phonetic transcription if the subword, it is submitted that the pending claims patentably distinguish over the references cited by the Examiner. It is further submitted that the prior art rejection should be withdrawn.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

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Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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